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


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


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175 patients of former gynecologist have signed on to lawsuit against Columbia University, attorney says

BY GRAHAM KATES

MARCH 30, 2021 / 7:10 PM / CBS NEWS



An attorney representing patients of a former gynecologist accused of sexual abuse says 175 women have now signed on to a lawsuit against Robert Hadden and his former employer, Columbia University.

In the lawsuit, first filed in 2018 by 17 women, Hadden is accused of sexual abuses dating back to the early 1990s, including licking and digitally penetrating his patients' vaginas without gloves, and fondling their breasts and anuses. The women involved in the case said they were assaulted while undergoing treatment ranging from basic pregnancy and postpartum care to HPV exams. At least two of the plaintiffs said they were assaulted when they were teenagers.

Anthony DiPietro, an attorney for the former patients, told CBS News that the case has grown tenfold. The number of potential plaintiffs ballooned in size after Evelyn Yang – whose husband Andrew sought the Democratic nomination for president and is currently running for New York City mayor – revealed in January 2020 that she was among Hadden's former patients.

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"There's 175 that have come forward, and meanwhile, that number seems to increase every few days," DiPietro said.

Columbia University said in a statement to CBS News that "Nothing is more important to Columbia than the safety of our patients, and we condemn sexual misconduct in any form."

"We commend the women who have called Robert Hadden to account for his abhorrent actions and deeply regret the harm he caused to patients who were in his care, and to their families," Columbia University said.

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The Columbia Spectator first reported that the number of women suing has grown to include 175 women.

Hadden was charged in 2014 in New York state court on allegations of sexual assault involving six

Hadden was charged in 2014 in New York state court on allegations of sexual assault involving six women. In 2016, he agreed to plead guilty to two individual counts of a criminal sex act in the third degree and forcible touching. The no jail plea deal downgraded his sex-offender status to the lowest

Hadden assaulted "dozens of female patients, including multiple minors" between 1993 and 2012. Each of the six counts of enticing and inducing individuals to travel interstate to engage in illegal sexual activity carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison.

Hadden entered a not guilty plea in the case. An attorney representing Hadden in his federal court case did not reply to a request for comment.

Audrey Strauss, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, said at the time that "Hadden acted as a predator in a white coat. "

"He allegedly used the cover of conducting medical examinations to engage in sexual abuse that he passed off as normal and medically necessary, when it was neither normal nor necessary - it was criminal," Strauss said.

The Manhattan District Attorney's office said in September that it is pursuing a criminal investigation into Columbia University's handling of incidents involving Hadden. That investigation is ongoing, according to a spokesperson for the office.

First published on March 30, 2021 / 7:10 PM

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Graham Kates

Graham Kates is an investigative reporter covering criminal justice, privacy issues and information security for CBS News Digital. Contact Graham at KatesG@cbsnews.com or grahamkates@protonmail.com

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EXHIBIT 23

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BREAKING NEWS: More women are coming forward to report on Columbia University and New York Presbyterian Hospital's decades of enabling of serial sexual predator Robert Hadden. Please contact us if you have information at (212) 233-3600. All discussions are 100% confidential.



The Law Office of Anthony T. DiPietro, P.C. has been fighting a legal battle against Columbia University and New York Presbyterian Hospital for the past 7-years to expose the corruption and institutional coverups involving Robert Hadden — the most prolific serial sexual predator in the history of New York.

Mr. DiPietro has also been selected to the New York State Super Lawyers® for his work in representing fellow humans who have been injured by medical negligence and sexual abuse cases.

Regardless of where you live, we can handle your case against Robert Hadden, Columbia University, and their related clinics in order to provide a path forward to justice. We're here to answer any questions you have.

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EXHIBIT 24

Please see attached CD

EXHIBIT 25

The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

New York gynecologist indicted on federal charges of sexually assaulting patients

By **Meryl Kornfield**



September 9, 2020 at 7:52 p.m. CDT

The gynecologist accused of sexual assault by the wife of former Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang was indicted on federal charges for the sexual abuse of six women over nearly two decades, according to federal prosecutors.

Former Manhattan doctor Robert A. Hadden is charged with six counts of enticing women to engage in illegal sex acts, Audrey Strauss, the acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced Wednesday at a joint news conference with FBI Assistant Director William F. Sweeney Jr.

Hadden, 62, was arrested by federal authorities at 6 a.m. in New Jersey, Strauss said.

Prosecutors allege that Hadden sexually assaulted dozens of women who were his patients at his OB/GYN practice from 1993 to 2012 “under the guise of purported medical examinations,” Strauss said.

“Hadden acted as a predator in a white coat,” Strauss said.

At least one of the victims listed in the indictment, whom Hadden had delivered himself, was underage during the alleged assault, Strauss said. It was not immediately clear why federal prosecutors listed six of the growing number of women who have accused Hadden, and the U.S. attorney’s office declined to comment further.

Hadden targeted unwitting women, according to Strauss, including many victims who saw Hadden as their first gynecologist.

“Many of Hadden’s victims did not know what to expect during an OB/GYN examination and were less likely to challenge Hadden when he engaged in sexually abusive behavior,” she said. “As a result, some of his victims immediately identified Hadden’s conduct as abusive but many didn’t know that his examinations were inappropriate, and so [they] returned to see him for years.”

The new charges each carry a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. At a bond hearing later Wednesday, Hadden’s lawyer, Isabelle Kirshner, argued before Magistrate Judge Robert W. Lehrburger that Hadden should be released from detention because he is caring for ill family members including his son with mental disabilities. Lehrburger agreed to his release on a \$1 million bond and pre-trial restrictions on where Hadden is allowed to go.

Kirshner declined to comment to The Post about the allegations presented at the news briefing Wednesday, saying she is representing him only for the arraignment thus far.

Alleged victims also spoke during the bond hearing, including three who shared statements with Assistant U.S.

Attorney Maureen Comey under the pseudonym Jane Doe. Citing the precedent of the case of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, Comey argued that the anonymous women could also be able to give their side to the court.

“I don’t think [Hadden] deserves any opportunity to prevent justice,” one woman said in a statement. “The court needs to ensure he has no chance to leave or hurt himself.”

Hadden previously pleaded guilty in 2016 and was given a deal by Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance Jr., which has been criticized as lax for the allegations levied. Hadden was forced to give up his medical license and register as a Level 1 sex offender but did not serve time in prison.

Strauss declined to comment on the 2016 deal. Vance’s office told The Washington Post it was involved in the federal investigation.

“Our office provided substantial assistance leading to today’s indictment, and our continuing investigation — which examines potential failures by Dr. Hadden’s employer and hospital to disclose additional incidents of abuse to our office and to regulators when required — is intensely active and ongoing,” Vance’s spokesman Danny Frost wrote in an email.

Anthony T. DiPietro, an attorney who represents more than 100 women accusing Hadden of assault, said he was thankful for the renewed effort to prosecute Hadden after the case languished for years.

“In some ways, this has been a long time coming, but in others, maybe things are just getting started,” DiPietro said in an interview. “We’re just grateful that prosecutors at the SDNY are taking a close look at this.”

On behalf of the victims, DiPietro is also suing Columbia University, accusing the administration of knowingly allowing the abuses to continue unfettered for decades.

“To me, what happened was, Hadden was allowed to negotiate something that closely resembled an early retirement than a criminal sentence for a sexual felony,” DiPietro said of Hadden’s earlier plea deal.

In an emotional interview with CNN, Evelyn Yang called the punishment a “slap on the wrist.” Yang said she was seven months pregnant when Hadden assaulted her at the end of a routine appointment.

“I just kind of froze, like a deer in headlights. Just frozen,” she told CNN in January. “... I remember trying to fix my eyes on a spot on the wall and just trying to avoid seeing his face as he was assaulting me. Just waiting for it to be over.”

Marissa Hoechstetter, another Hadden accuser, called the indictment an example of “the collective power of survivors’ voices.”

Hoechstetter echoed Yang’s frustrations with the plea deal, saying the federal case offers the victims a second chance at justice.

“At a time when the world is focused on criminal justice reforms and the power of district attorneys, the Hadden story is a shining example of our flawed two-tiered system of justice,” she wrote in an emailed statement. “I hope that today’s revelation offers hope and encouragement to any of Hadden’s other former patients who wish to come forward.”

Shauna Jacobs and Allyson Chiu contributed to this report.

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Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance announced on Friday that he won't seek reelection. | Mary Altalter/AP Photo

Sex crime accountability group names three top candidates for Manhattan DA

By ERIN DURKIN | 03/14/2021 07:07 PM EDT

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A campaign pushing to focus the race for Manhattan district attorney on justice for sex crimes survivors is recommending three candidates in the upcoming Democratic primary.

Marissa Hoechstetter launched the group Reform the Sex Crimes Unit after speaking out about being assaulted by OB-GYN Robert Hadden — who was accused of the same by multiple women, but let off with no prison time by DA Cy Vance, prompting widespread criticism.



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Vance formally announced on Friday that he won't seek reelection. His office also at first declined to pursue charges against Harvey Weinstein, whose crimes became a prime catalyst for the #MeToo movement.

The group aimed to replace Vance with a successor focused on revamping sex crimes prosecutions. Eight Democrats are now vying for the open seat.

In a report, first reviewed by POLITICO, Reform the Sex Crimes Unit rates the candidates and finds that Tali Farhadian Weinstein, the former general counsel to the Brooklyn DA; former federal prosecutor Alvin Bragg and former Manhattan assistant DA Diana Florence are the top three picks.

The group sent each candidate a questionnaire asking how they would staff the sex crimes unit, how they would help victims overcome barriers to reporting assaults, what legislative changes they would push for, what data about sex crimes they would report publicly and how they would avoid conflicts of interest from campaign donors.

"The 2021 DA election is an opportunity to bring new leadership to an office that regularly fails survivors of sexual violence," the group says in its report. "Survivors frequently share their experiences of being dissuaded, disbelieved, or discarded by [Vance's] office for not having enough evidence, for not being the 'perfect victim,' or for not wanting to put themselves at greater risk. It is time for this to end."

An anonymous panel of about 20 sexual assault survivors, advocates and attorneys helped evaluate the candidates' responses.

"Several of these candidates put forward really strong plans, which make me feel like they could restore faith in that office," Hoechstetter said.

The group lauded plans from Farhadian Weinstein to launch a bureau of gender-based violence and from Bragg to overhaul the sex crimes unit. It also backed Florence's legislative agenda as well as her pledge to publicly disclose outcomes of all cases and whether lawyers involved have given campaign donations.

Many of the candidates in the race are running to the left, vowing to reduce incarceration, seek lesser sentences and stop prosecuting certain offenses. But those priorities can clash with securing justice for victims of rape and sexual assault, Hoechstetter said.

"Sex crimes present a challenge for progressive prosecutors, because they want to make promises that are not punitive," she said. "Some of the commitments feel really extreme, and not realistic."

The group gave a middle ground, cautionary rating to three candidates: former

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AJA Lucy Lang, Assembly member Ian Quart, and civil rights attorney Iananie Aboushi.

The lowest rating of 'not recommended' went to criminal defense lawyer Liz Crotty and public defender Eliza Orlins. They said Crotty, the most moderate Democrat in the field, lacked substantive plans, while Orlins went too far in the direction of reducing prosecutions for all defendants, such as by pledging to always seek the minimum prison sentence.

Reform the SCU noted that many of the candidates cite a need for restorative justice — an approach that emphasizes bringing perpetrators and victims together to devise a resolution.

"Most of the panel agreed that restorative justice should be part of a range of options offered victims but find it unimaginable in violent crimes like rape and sexual assault of minors or in cases by serial offenders," their report says. "There was also a concern that victims not feel pressured to seek such resolutions by an office desperate to reduce carceral punishments."

Hochstetter said she stopped short of offering an outright endorsement because voters would want to weigh multiple sets of issues in making their picks, but she thinks their stances on sex crimes have received too little attention in the race.

Candidates have emphasized the excessive criminalization of Black and Latino New Yorkers, which Hochstetter agrees is a problem.

"It's those same communities who are often not helped enough when it comes to sexual violence," she said. "I felt really that that's missing from the conversation about the Manhattan DA."

If you are a survivor of sexual assault, or you know someone who is, help is available. In the U.S., call the National Sexual Assault Telephone Hotline at 800.656.HOPE (4673) to be connected with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area.

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Marissa Hoechstetter (center) speaks at a rally in support of the Adult Survivors Act on February 28, 2020 in New York City. | Scott Heims/Getty Images

'The most good for the most people': Leading sex crimes justice advocate backs Bragg for DA

By DAVID GIAMBUSSO | 05/03/2021 10:49 AM EDT



Marissa Hoechstetter, who founded a group to promote justice for sex crime survivors, is endorsing Alvin Bragg in the crowded race for Manhattan district attorney.

Hoechstetter, who devoted years to exposing the sexual predation of a Columbia University gynecologist, said in an interview over the weekend her decision follows months of weighing two priorities: aggressively pursuing justice for sex crime survivors while reshaping a criminal justice system that disproportionately targets and incarcerates low-income communities of color.



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"He will be the person who will do the most good for the most people," she said of Bragg, while noting the endorsement is her own personal choice, and not that of her organization, Reform the Sex Crimes Unit.

Hoechstetter's group announced in March it would back three candidates in the race: Bragg, a former federal

prosecutor; Tali Farhadian Weinstein, the former general counsel to the Brooklyn DA; and former Manhattan assistant DA Diana Florence.

"We know there's so much more to be done to reform a criminal justice system that is sexist, racist and classist," she said.

Finding the right balance: The quandary for sex crime survivors is some of the policy reforms popular with the progressive left are difficult for sexual assault survivors to imagine.

In a report issued in March, Reform the SCU discussed the notion of restorative justice in particular — an approach that emphasizes bringing perpetrators and victims together to devise a resolution.

"Most of the panel agreed that restorative justice should be part of a range of options offered victims but find it unimaginable in violent crimes like rape and sexual assault of minors or in cases by serial offenders," their report found. "There was also a concern that victims not feel pressured to seek such resolutions by an office desperate to reduce carceral punishments."

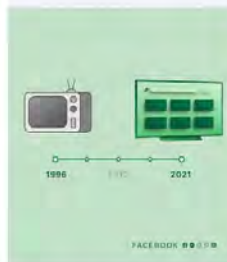


Hoechstetter was confident Bragg could "address the public health crisis of sex crimes while also addressing the problem of mass incarceration."

Bragg's platform involves creating a dedicated sex crimes unit that reports directly to the Manhattan DA. Prosecutors on that team would focus on those investigations exclusively and staff would include counselors, medical

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professionals and investigators.

Key to the approach would be getting the DA's office involved as soon as a complaint is made.

"Often people go to the police first and their search for justice is quashed at that level," Hoechstetter said. In Bragg's model, "if you go to the NYPD first, DA staff will be involved at the beginning of the investigation. That's really important."

Bragg's plan also calls for examining institutions that may be enabling or shielding sexual predators.

"Marissa Hoechstetter has been courageous in her leadership to transform the Manhattan DA sex crimes unit to deliver justice for survivors," Bragg said in a statement. "I'm honored and humbled to have her support and look forward to working with her to create a high-quality, survivor-centered sex crimes unit that is transparent, trauma-informed, and delivers justice for all."

Lessons from the Hadden case: Hoechstetter led a 2018 lawsuit against Columbia University and New York Presbyterian, where her attacker, Robert Hadden, was employed as an OB-GYN. The original suit was brought by 17 women but an attorney for the former patients has recently said it now includes 175 women, some of whom were children at the time of their abuse, accusing Hadden of sexual assault over the span of decades. Among them was Evelyn Yang, wife of mayoral front-runner, Andrew Yang.

Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance's office had negotiated a deal with Hadden in 2016 where he'd lose his medical license, but serve no jail time and avoid registering as a sex offender.

Years later, in large part because of the advocacy of Hoechstetter and others, Hadden was indicted by the U.S. Attorney's office on six counts of unlawful sexual abuse — each count carrying a potential 20-year prison sentence.

Hoechstetter and many others saw Vance's initial actions as a part of a pattern of going easy on white, powerful men and the institutions where they worked.

"Most of the coverage of my story is why didn't Hadden go to jail," she said. "I'm about, 'Let's back up and talk about why he was allowed to work there, why the DA didn't do a more thorough investigation.'"

In some cases, she said, "maybe we can't go after the sex crime but maybe we can go after the institution. ... It could be a signal of other things happening."

Of the three candidates backed by Reform the SCU, Hoechstetter is choosing the man. She said her support is predicated not on gender, but on who she thinks is the most qualified.

"Some of the worst misogynists that I have encountered were women in the DA's office; people who lied to me; people who asked for his sex offender status to be reduced," she said.

A significant part of the next DA's job will be convincing survivors to come forward after so many years of the wealthy and privileged avoiding justice, Hoechstetter said.

"In endorsing Alvin, I'm going to hold him accountable," she said. "Part of what I think is unfortunate is the trust that Vance has lost. I think it's going to take a lot to repair that trust."

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NYC Council passes bill to allow for striking deviant doctors from birth certificates

By JILLIAN JORGENSEN

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS | MAR 28, 2019



FEEDBACK



Robert Hadden, the gynecologist accused of sexually abusing patients, is seen in Manhattan Supreme Court on February 23, 2016. (Alec Tabak/for New York Daily News)

FEEDBACK

New Yorkers will be able to remove deviant doctors from their children's birth certificates under a bill passed by the City Council Thursday.

The bill allows for the removal of the name of the attending doctor from a birth certificate if the doctor had his or her license suspended, revoked or surrendered due to misconduct.

It passed 47-0 after a public crusade led by Marissa Hoechstetter, who was sexually abused by Robert Hadden, the gynecologist who delivered her twins.

“This is an example of how one brave and relentless leader can actually move government,” Councilman Mark Levine, who sponsored the bill, said of Hoechstetter.

FEEDBACK

Hadden was charged with abusing six patients but pleaded guilty to sexually abusing just two of them as part of a plea deal that outraged some of his victims because it included no jail time. Hoechstetter did not get to bring her own case against Hadden — she’s said Manhattan District Attorney Cy Vance Jr.’s office incorrectly told her the statute of limitations had passed.

The legislation initially met resistance from Mayor de Blasio’s administration over legal concerns — but eventually the administration agreed to support the bill.

“The pressure from Marissa and the united front here in the Council, perhaps they reconsidered their legal analysis,” Levine said. “At the end of the day we got a really good bill passed and it’s going to do a great thing for these women.”

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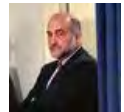
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NYC Women Are Getting Pervy Doctors' Names Deleted From Birth Certificates

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A new law allows parents whose doctors have had their medical licenses revoked to have the physician's name scrubbed from the documents.

Emily Shugerman

Gender Reporter

Published Jan. .6, 2020 4:59AM ET



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NYC Women Are Getting Pervy Doctors' Names Deleted From Birth Certificates

Dayna Solomon was heading out for a press conference this fall when her 10-year-old son asked where she was going. Solomon, a chatty creative who works in the fashion industry, had to pause before answering. The press conference was about a New York gynecologist who Solomon says sexually abused her—and who, before his license was revoked, had also delivered her son. She settled on telling him a toned-down version of the truth, that she was going to talk about a doctor who had behaved badly, before an idea came to her. “Do you want to get his name removed from your birth certificate?” she asked.

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parents whose doctors have had their medical licenses revoked can get the physician's name taken off their children's birth certificates. While the law applies to any kind of misconduct, it was inspired by patients like Solomon, who say they were sexually abused by their doctors.

According to the sponsor, City Councilmember Mark Levine, it is the first such law passed in any U.S. city. He said he'd heard from nearly 50 survivors of sexual abuse during the legislative process, and he expects many more to come. "Once survivors realize they have this right, I think many more will come forward," he said.

Several of those survivors were patients of Solomon's doctor, Robert Hadden, who has been accused of sexually harassing or assaulting more than 25 patients. According to court documents, the

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comments to putting his tongue on patients' vaginas. He was indicted in 2014 on nine different counts of sexual misconduct, but after cutting a deal and pleading guilty to a single felony count of third-degree criminal sexual act and misdemeanor forcible touching, he served no time in jail and was allowed to register as the lowest level of sex offender.

Victims Sue USC Over Abusive Gyno: 'Protecting a Predator'



| VIOLATED |

Olivia Messer

A former patient of Hadden, Marissa Hoeschetter, was the first to advocate for the new law. She says she got the idea when she pulled out her daughters' birth certificates to register them for

kindergarten and saw his

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that he not be allowed to stay
in that position of privilege.

“[The fact that] his hands
were the first in the entire
universe to touch my children
is something that is deeply
sad for me and not something
I could change, so I wanted to
get his name off of this
document,” she told The
Daily Beast.

“I did not think it would
become so complicated,” she
added, “but like so many
things, it became a battle.”

That was five years ago. In
the following weeks,
Hoeschetter said, she reached
out to the New York City
Health Department for help,
but received no response. She
says she spent the better part
of two years going back and
forth with the agency before
she finally learned that she
would need a court order to
remove the name. Even then,
Hoeschetter wasn’t sure she
would prevail: City policy

said court orders could only

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***“His hands
were the first
in the entire
universe to
touch my
children.”***

**— Marissa
Hoeschetter**

Hoeschetter reached out to Levine’s office for assistance. At the time, Levine says, he was surprised to hear that the change couldn’t be made administratively. He had just helped pass a law allowing New Yorkers to change the gender marker on their birth certificate. He didn’t understand why removing an unlicensed doctor’s name should be more difficult. “I was shocked to learn of the inflexibility in the law on an issue that seems to be quite common sense,” he said. “So

resolved to fix it by

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But changing the law would not be easy. After hearing very little from Mayor Bill de Blasio's team on the proposal, Levine was shocked when administration came out against the bill. At hearing in February, Gretchen Van Wye, the assistant commissioner of the Bureau of Vital Statistics, said the agency was willing to work with the Council on the issue, but that they were concerned about the "legal implications" of the change. Van Wye said that removing the doctor's name could damage the integrity of the birth certificate and cause other jurisdictions not to respect it.

Levine was flabbergasted. "It was probably one of the most astounding moments in any hearing I've ever chaired," he said.

Levine and Hoeschetter went back to an advocacy campaign, lobbying Council

members one-on-one.

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and the bill passed
unanimously. Hoeschetter
brought her daughters to the
signing ceremony.

“It was
probably one
of the most
astounding
moments in
any hearing
I’ve ever
chaired.”

— City
Councilmember Mark
Levine

The women making the
change know that it is largely
symbolic; it will not result in
their doctors serving more
jail time or take away the
pain of what happened. But
for many, it is a rare victory
over a system they believe is
set against them. For

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who felt cheated by his plea deal, removing his name from their birth certificates feels like the most justice they have received.

"So much of my pregnancy and birth and all that is a negative thing for me, and it's ruined so I'm sort of trying to reclaim a part of that, and this a physical, tangible way to do that," Hoeschetter said.

Other women said the change was primarily about their kids. They didn't want their children to pull out their birth certificates for a big event—a new job, or a wedding—and be reminded of trauma. One alleged victim, who asked not to be named, said she was terrified for the day her 11-year-old daughter starts asking questions about her birth. "She's the joy of my life," she said. "I didn't want to have anything [negative] associated with such a momentous occasion."

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her when they can have Hadden's name removed. He recently told her he didn't want any of his friends to see the name of the doctor who delivered him. She even set a calendar reminder on her phone for the day the law took effect: on Jan. 1 of this year.

Despite the sadness of the occasion, she said she is excited to show her son when the change is made. "I think it shows an evaluation in our society that we're able to do that," she said.

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New York Bill Would Give Adult Sexual Abuse Survivors Their Day In Court

By Karen DeWitt | May 12, 2021

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ALBANY, NY (WSKG) — Saying she and other adult sexual abuse survivors deserve their day in court, Marissa Hoechstetter is looking to the New York State Legislature to make that possible.

Hoechstetter said former Columbia University doctor Robert Hadden sexually abused her in 2010, when he conducted routine medical exams during her pregnancy.

In 2016, after 19 women had issued complaints against Hadden, he struck a plea deal with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office to give up his medical license, but he received no jail time and did not have to be listed on New York's sex offender registry.

Since then, the #MeToo movement began, and more than 180 more women have come forward to say that they were also subject to unwanted groping and attempted oral sex.



The New York State Capitol

New York has a 20-year statute of limitation for rape, but for other forms of forced sexual contact, it's only five years. The Adult Survivors Act, currently being considered by the State Legislature, would create a special one-year lookback window to allow New Yorkers who were sexually assaulted as adults to file a lawsuit against the person who harmed them, even if the statute of limitations has expired.

They would also be able to file a civil suit against any institution — such as a workplace, school or house of worship — where the abuse took place.

It's modeled after the 2019 Child Victims Act, which has resulted in 5,000 lawsuits being filed by survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

Hoechstetter said adults should have the same option.

"We are not asking the Legislature to make any decisions on the merit of our case; we are simply asking for access to the courthouse," Hoechstetter said. "And I believe that should be granted. It is up to the survivor, if they want to, to pursue that."

Heela Capell, a Housing Court judge in Brooklyn and a survivor of childhood sexual abuse, said survivors do not always process trauma on a linear timeline. Sometimes it can take years before someone is ready to confront their abuser in court, she said.

Capell said even though she is very familiar with the justice system, she was nervous about pursuing action when the Child Victims Act provided the one-year lookback window in 2019 and 2020.

"It's not easy for me," she said. "It's terrifying for me."

Capell, who is running for election as a civil court judge, said she has faith in the justice system to hold abusers and the institutions that enabled them accountable.

She said the law can also serve another purpose — to make would-be perpetrators think twice before they act.

"For people to realize this is not OK behavior," Capell said. "If it does that for just a portion of folks, I think that that's successful."

Hoechstetter added that it can also take some time to determine an institution's culpability in a case of a serial abuser. She said there's growing evidence that Hadden's abuse at Columbia went on for 20 years, and that complaints from other staff went unheeded.

Supporters say the Adult Survivors Act has a good chance of passage this year. If the measure is approved in both houses and goes to Cuomo's desk to sign or veto, it could put the governor in an awkward position.

New York Attorney General Letitia James began an investigation after several women accused Cuomo of sexual harassment, including unwelcome hugging and kissing, and, in one instance, touching a female staffer's breasts without her consent. The governor denies the allegations, and says he didn't do anything wrong.

Cuomo has not commented on the bill, but if he were to sign the measure, some of his accusers could have the opportunity to file a lawsuit against him.

Hoechstetter said it's not her place to comment on Cuomo's alleged actions. But she said the

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tales over the past two months of the women's trauma, accompanied by statements from most of the state's top Democratic and Republican politicians condemning the alleged acts and praising the women's courage have been emotionally exhausting.

"We're tired of empty promises from lawmakers," Hoechstetter said. "It's not enough to keep putting out statements admiring people's bravery or saying that they stand with us. This is a tangible way to show survivors that we matter, and that our voices matter."

Hoechstetter, along with survivors of sexual abuse by now-imprisoned former movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, has sent a letter to Cuomo, asking him to support the bill. The letter was also signed by Evelyn Yang, wife of New York City mayoral and former Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang. Evelyn Yang was also abused by Hadden.

The Senate Judiciary Committee approved the bill on Tuesday.



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Western Wildfires Cause Air Quality Hazards Across New York

VESTAL, NY (WSKG) — For weeks, New York has experienced air quality issues caused by wildfires in the west. Smoke plumes from wildfires carried by the wind have caused haze and particles in the air throughout the northeast.



EPA Soliciting Comment On Vapor Intrusion Plan In Elmira Heights

VESTAL, NY (WSKG) — After more than 30 years of assessment and mitigation efforts, Elmira Heights may be entering one of the final stages of remediation on the superfund site that has polluted the community since World War II. Representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) held a community meeting

Wednesday to discuss the next proposed remediation measure, this one addressing continued vapor intrusion for homes and other structures southeast of the former Facet Enterprises facility.



Vaccination Rate In NY Prisons At 46 Percent, All Inmates Offered The Vaccine

PLATTSBURGH, NY (NCPR) — All 32,000 people incarcerated in New York State prisons have been offered the COVID-19 vaccine and, to date, 46% have been vaccinated. According to the NYS Dept.



New York To Mandates Vaccines For State Employees

ALBANY, NY (WSKG) — Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Wednesday, the state will mandate that front-line workers in New York state-run hospitals be vaccinated against COVID-19. All other state workers will also have to be vaccinated or be subject to weekly testing.



NY Lawmakers Examine Challenges Faced by Nursing Homes

New York NOW — Staff at New York's nursing homes aren't paid enough to compete with entry-level positions in other industries, which health care groups told the state Legislature Tuesday has led to average turnover rates in recent years as high as 94 percent. Those workers are typically paid at or near the minimum wage, which ranges from \$12.50 an hour in upstate New York to \$15 an hour in New York City.

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